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THE INDIAN PROBLEM.

Malabari, Behramji Rustomji.

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The notes scattered over these pages grew out of a conversation in London, where they were circulated privately, in order to elicit responsible opinion.

They have now been reprinted, with additions, to meet an increasing demand.

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THE INDIAN PROBLEM.

INDIA is becoming the problem of the age. More than Europe, more than America, is this Sphinx of an Ancient Civilization puzzling the political seer. Who can tell whether she is nodding, or shaking her head?—whether she is asleep, or is only winking at the puny efforts of man to read her mind? The more one tries to know India, the less he seems to understand her. It is hopeless to unravel this live problem of humanity; to follow its inner workings. The utmost one could do is to watch its obvious tendencies at work. Let us look at the phenomenon; you, with your insight and quickness of grasp; I, with my half-despairing, half-admiring devotion. What, then, are the tendencies we observe? On the one side, we see the great power of Order and Justice—proud, disdainful, stolid, but always making for righteousness and progress. This is the spell which the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race has thrown all over the continent of India, often in spite, at times, at the urgent call, of Anarchy. On the other side, we see the immense, unthinking, ever-suffering, easily satisfied, silent masses—shaken out of their slumber by occasional fits of religious hatred. Between the two, we see a small body of political reformers and imitators of the political methods of Europe, created by the foreign rule, and

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therefore entitled to its protection; and a still smaller band of all-round reformers who place self-improvement before self-advancement in the race of modern competition. It would scarcely be to our purpose to look into the rights and disabilities of each party, and its prospects. Leaving speculation to philosophers, let us glance at the real grievances of India as a whole. But let us note, beforehand, that India is scarcely a unit, politically or otherwise. Its north differs as widely from its south as its east differs from its west, and as its centre differs from each of these. In some respects the difference is wider, indeed, than that between any one country of Europe and any other. What, then, are the real needs of the Empire at this moment? (1) Financial justice and (2) political *control* more than political *power*. And these could be had mainly when English opinion, at present bewildered and almost demoralised, is called back to a sense of its own strength and of its duty towards itself as well as the millions dependent on it; when that opinion is reminded that the pivot of good government is Love, not fear; confidence, not distrust or despotism. To some extent they also depend on how the semi-elective legislative councils in India exercise their functions, especially that of interpellation. It is for these, by a judicious course of action, not only to restore confidence among the ruling class, but also to obtain a larger share of control. They know what possibilities of control they have secured in this right of interpellation. If the right is nominal at present, it still contains the germs of reality.

Exercised but indirectly in the beginning, may it not become an instrument of direct interposition in the end? Much depends upon how it is used in the meantime. The right is probably the most valuable a foreign Government ever conceded to its subjects. Anyhow, this is the first time in the history of India that her representatives have been invested with it. Let them take care not to exercise it in a way to frighten the prudes of public opinion in England. The Englishman hates random experiments. He believes in the gradual development of what exists, but has no faith in new-fangled theories. He is too prosaic for bold innovations, though always open to new light in his dull, half-dazed manner. But if he is slow in adopting a new idea, he is slower in discarding it when once adopted. This could hardly be said of any other European ruler with whose foreign relations we are acquainted. Let us not be dazzled by the glitter of good intentions, or generalize in favour of this or that quick-witted race from this or that instance of political or diplomatic liberality. The Englishman does not like change; but when it becomes inevitable, he is happier to change from worse to better than from better to worse. It would be well for critics always to remember this while in the exercise of newly acquired rights. Let them put themselves in the position of those against whom they exercise their power of control. Let them look at things from the official stand-point as well as the popular. Let them also take a correct measure of their own strength—of

their capacity for work, as apart from talk, of their power of cohesion. For the exercise of higher political privileges their education is still but skin-deep. It must spread deeper and wider, permeate the whole fabric of society, before the ablest and best members thereof could be said to have fitted themselves for progressive self-government. It is a work of generations for old ideals, old habits and customs to make room for new ones; for the current of thought and aspiration of a people to run into the assimilative from the imitative stage.

Above all, let the critics avoid wholesale imitation of the party politics of England. The conditions of political life there are different from those prevalent in this country. In England, the critics are generally ready to take up the place of the party in power whom it is their business to dislodge—though when themselves in power, they may do very much the same that they condemned in their opponents. There, the parties exist mainly to oppose each other and to usurp each other's power. The men in power this year are the men in opposition next year. The one criticises the other in order to replace it. The opposition may sometimes serve as a drag, a sort of brake; but the real object is to upset the vehicle and to usurp the reins. In India, the case is otherwise. Here, the critics cannot, and do not profess to, take up the responsible task of government. Their business is to guide, to check, to control the exercise of more or less absolute power. It is all the more desirable,

therefore, that their criticism should be, on the whole, moderate and constructive, and that while joining issue with the executive officials or the heads of departments, they should leave the Government free to decide between the two. No good is likely to accrue from mixing up the Government with its officials. If the Government is always a tool in the hands of its officials ; if the officials are all so bad as they are sometimes painted ; then there is no hope, no chance, of improvement. A general smash up of the machinery must follow. Are the critics prepared to carry on the administration themselves ? If not, they will doubtless see the risk of weakening the hold of Government by a wanton abuse of their power of check and control.

On the other hand, if this outside controlling agency has its duty, so has the governing agency. If the officials want forbearance on the part of their critics, they must themselves show conciliation and the power to unbend. This is a *great power*, the power of unbending, if they will see it. They must give up the old attitude of disdain, and try to replace it gradually by a habit of accommodation, a willingness to learn and to unlearn. The rigidity of the old habit—a second nature with the Anglo-Saxon abroad—must relax in proportion to the rise of Western ideas in the country. It is this new leaven that makes the subjects impatient of rough usage, sensitive under restraint, and eager to find fault with their betters. Is there anything unduly derogatory to your dignity in this

assertion of self-respect on the part of English-educated Indians?—anything of an insult to your own self-respect? On the contrary, it is the highest compliment that governors could claim. Let the officials recognize this new force by treating as their equals those educated representatives of the people, who are worthy of such treatment. If they expect public criticism of their measures to be constructive, let them take the critics into confidence, and give them an insight into the working of the Administration. This was the objective the earlier statesmen had in view. And this has been the policy of their successors generally. To draw upon the educated intelligence of the people, in the management of their own affairs, and so far to lighten the burden on the foreign agency and at the same time to make its rule more acceptable—this has been the principle underlying British policy, more especially since the passing of India to the Crown. Have the executive duly appreciated this beneficent policy? The older paternal attitude may have had its merits; but it has served its purpose, and must now be put upon the shelf of past history so far as the educated classes have to be dealt with. That attitude is incompatible with the genius of England, with its system of education and administration. What was accepted in the older days as paternal guidance is now resented as step-motherly intermeddling. The *Mabap* of old, mother and father rolled into one, and venerated with the dual homage lavished on the cow, has now come to be stigmatised as the male-spinster in office, to be teased and laughed at. It is useless for

the latter, and worse than useless, to sit wringing his hands at what he thinks to be the ingratitude of the younger generation in refusing to be snubbed and cajoled by turn, to be treated as children incapable of growing to man's estate. Why stigmatise as reckless the child's attempt to walk, now that it has learnt to stand on its legs, may be with the crutch of a wise concession? Why denounce as disloyal the attempts of a boy who has begun to run about and stretch his limbs by way of preparation for a trial of strength worthy of his manhood, fostered by yourself? If there is so much of discontent and 'sedition' in the country, side by side with the spread of education; if no educated native is free from this contagion; what hope is there for the permanence of a foreign rule?—what justification for the presence of foreigners in India? Logically, and in the light of human experience, the British ought to be proud of the change they have been witnessing. Even if this change required a further concession, they ought to be willing to make it, provided the general interests do not suffer thereby. It is time the average official learnt to recognize the various forces that are coming into play, and of which he himself is partly the author. Personally as well as in his official capacity must the Englishman broaden the basis of his sympathy with the educated Indian, quicken his pace with him wherever he can; he must unbend, must stoop to conquer; or, having conquered, to rule. His natural stolidity is not without its uses; but it ill compares with the quickness of other ruling races; and the oriental, steeped in western

radicalism, is apt to make too much of this comparison. Let Englishmen and Englishwomen in India be fair and courteous towards the educated native everywhere – from the railway carriage to the Viceregal Durbar. Let them behave as Christian exemplars, at any rate in the minor details of life. Are they above the Queen Empress and her family in this respect? Surely, that example ought to suffice for the winning of hearts and the cooling of heads. May it be given to these representatives of a foreign Power to understand that “loyalty” does not mean the selfish humouring of their own sweet will, but disinterested attachment to the Crown and the nation they have come out to serve and to represent! There is no other “loyalty”, in the political sense, to which an educated intellect or a cultured conscience could reconcile itself.

To return to the main theme, is a feeling of unrest coming over India? As regards the towns and the cities, and more or less as regards the educated classes and those that come in contact with them, the question must be answered in the affirmative. To the extent indicated, there is some new spirit abroad, call it unrest or activity, or anything else you like. But there is nothing in it to cause alarm or even surprise. Is this change in the spirit of Young India’s dream unexpected? We must not shut our eyes to sixty years of western education, ushering in freedom of discussion, with the newspaper press for its outward symbol, scattering light and darkness alike, aided by railway, telegraph

and post. Was not the result fully anticipated by those who fought for and secured to India the benefits of modern education? Why, then, the present surprise? If the surprise is feigned, the sooner we cease playing with edged tools, the better. Let us also remember that the press in India, with their allies, have hitherto done much more of the talking than of the thinking. Strange as it may sound, the thinking stage has yet to be reached through this talking and writing stage. The majority of Indian writers have yet to learn history. They know but little of the outside world, even of a next-door neighbour like Egypt. But this limited knowledge suffices to tell them that England is their good providence. It is this knowledge, really, that accounts for most of the extravagance marking the utterances of the press and of the platform orator. Why should the official mind make itself uneasy over the inevitable? Of the two evils, of popular unrest and official distrust, the latter is decidedly worse; it marks a deterioration of the stuff of which statesmen are made. As proof of this may be instanced the question, half sneeringly asked by a friendly official, "If your people do not want us, why don't they turn us out of India?" Happily, the Indians know better. Supposing the English took it into their heads to withdraw from India in favour of a Home Rule party, they would very likely find a telegram waiting for them at Aden, imploring them to return by the same steamer. A week's time would be long enough for the most sanguine among our politicians to see

that governing a country, governing their own country, is not half so easy a task as passing resolutions or recording votes. Let us, therefore, dismiss the suspicion, if any exists, that conductors of the Indian press are preparing to assume the supreme conduct of affairs. These writers may sometimes do more harm than good by their one-sided activity; but are we satisfied that the absence of such activity would not lead, might not have led, to more undesirable results? The press in India compare favourably, on the whole, with their prototype elsewhere; and as is known, the worse offenders among them borrow their tactics from those who are bound to set them a better example. Besides, writers in the press do not always mean half of what they say; nor is their opinion invariably the opinion of the public at large.

Much the same view may be taken of our political bodies, with the Congress at their head. The Congress does not wish to usurp the reins of government; it is content with ventilating grievances and suggesting remedies. Whatever the smaller adherents of this movement may say or do, its responsible leaders know their place and their principal function. They know that they are in charge of a ploughing machine which, if wisely used, may clear the field of Indian Administration, and make it fit hereafter for sowing the seed of true political progress. They know how uneven the soil is, and how ungrateful. Why

not let them plough, so long as they vary the initial process according to the varying nature of the soil? If all goes well, the next generation may do the sowing. The reaping of the harvest must be left to another generation. May we not trust to our political plough-boys, the product of English education, avoiding to sow the wind? They are sufficiently wise to know what the nation would have to reap therefrom. If the official class were equally wise, they might yet see that the best way for them to curse the Congress is to bless it; the easiest way of removing this thorn from the side of the Administration is to accept it as one of its own ribs. It would then cease to trouble, and there would be one cause the less of the unrest that haunts their waking hours. A word of warning may seem to be called for, in this place, for the extreme section of the Congress party, or rather, for those impossible little politicians who air their crudities in the name of the Congress. What has been submitted above, to responsible Indians in the enjoyment of the right of qualified control, applies, to a larger extent and with much greater force, to irresponsible public speakers and writers. These would do well, in creating difficulties for a foreign Government, to remember that the Government has serious difficulties of its own to contend with; especially the financial difficulty at home and the frontier difficulty abroad. That to go on hounding an agency, so situated, is to show as if the critics courted a change of rulers. If this is what our well-meaning malcontents want, they may be

sure they will find it a very bad exchange. A little knowledge of history, a brief acquaintance with the outer world, will show that the best of possible changes may prove perhaps worse than the worst we have yet reached under the British. Our only chance, therefore, is to use this foreign agency as our own, to make the most of it ; correcting its mistakes, supplying its defects, helping it, with our more intimate knowledge of the conditions of life in the country, to a better frame of mind and a better mode of government. This is what the leaders of the Congress aim at : to improve the system of administration, not to abolish it. Any deviation from this fundamental principle is to be regretted. Much more to be regretted is the new tendency, observable here and there, for the Congress to degenerate into a caucus ; or, to be more accurate, the attempts that seem to be made in some quarters to use the Congress as a caucus. Nothing could be more unfortunate for a country just awakening to a sense of freedom and independence. As against the Government, such a caucus would only intensify the spirit of bureaucracy that runs rampant, darken counsel, and make the task of governing a heterogeneous mass doubly difficult. As against the majority of educated or otherwise influential Indians, a caucus like this, if allowed to raise its head, would work even greater havoc. It would be another vested interest, added to the hundreds under which the people in general groan. With its sinister organization of boycoting and terrorism, it might become the most powerful

engine for repressing the nascent spirit of independence which is the best result of liberal education, and which it is one of the principal objects of the promoters of the Congress to foster and to preserve from the grinding operation of the bureaucracy. With some of our purblind ultra-radicals the ideal of "patriotism" seems to have become as bleared as the ideal of "loyalty" has become obscured with self-satisfied officials. Patriotism is not a blatant denunciation of everything that emanates from others, nor an equally blatant exaltation of the emptiness of our own conceits. If the Congress had more consistent, self-denying, practical adherents—men willing to improve as well as advance—it would find the majority of Englishmen ready, at least, to listen to it. It might find many an official working with it for the common good. The co-operation of liberal-minded officials, trained in the ways of the administration, and acquainted with the needs of the people, would be of value, not only in the mooting of practical questions, but also in working them up with the help of select committees entrusted with special inquiries all over the country, and in confronting official optimists and apologists with the results of such inquiries. What an immense scope there is for such constructive work in regard to the questions of poverty, the employment of natives in the subordinate branches of the public service, for which they are naturally much better fitted than foreigners; for work in ascertaining the grievances of the poor, as inflicted by bad laws, or the bad working of good laws in the hands of

the Revenue, Forest, Salt, Abkari, and other departments!—for work in reference to sanitation and hygiene, and certain outer aspects of what is called the social question, but which has really a more direct bearing on the political progress of the country; and for the redress of other self-inflicted wrongs! All this, however, means responsible *work*—study, comparison, verification—and the exercise of constant self-restraint.

And here ends our concern, for the present, with that popular unrest in India which is making the official mind so restless. It is not difficult to decide which is the more pitiable—the spirit of unrest coming over a section of the Indian community, drunk with the wine of European ideas, or the unsettling of the Anglo-Saxon mind that has learnt to smell a mutiny in unleavened bread or the daubing of trees. The people of India as a whole, seem to be equally indifferent to both—to the peevish unrest of their Anglicized brethren, and the morbid wakefulness of some of their Indianized rulers.

But how, then, are we to explain recent occurrences in India? What about the mysterious daubing of mango trees in Behar? Well, if this incident shows anything, it shows from what little causes the excited imagination may jump to large sweeping conclusions. This smearing of trees is by no means the first occurrence of its kind, though certainly the first to be taken so much notice of.

Who has not heard of villagers smearing trees, in order to avert a blight, or cutting holes into them for their gods to dwell in, or making certain uniform marks on or near them, in order to indicate the route to a new shrine? Such work needs sudden execution—mystery is its chief merit. The local authorities here did not notice it, because it was not worth noticing in the first instance. Nobody was caught doing it, because it was nobody's business to catch the victims of superstition. When the whole thing was noticed on an unusually extensive scale, it began to call for explanation. But there was no explanation forthcoming, as there was nothing to explain. The villagers became *mum*, finding the police to be serious. The seriousness was, perhaps, as much an after-thought, a thing put on, as was the air of mystery and silence on the other side. Once the incident was raised into a portent of political danger, and excitement rose to its height where all should have been calm indifference, it needed but little ingenuity to weave explanations and gloomy forecasts. Very much the same importance was given to the distribution of *chapâtis* just before the outbreak of the sepoy revolt. That, too, was a mysterious occurrence, and could not but have caused the troubles it preceded. In fact, however, the Mutiny has never been traced to the *chapâtis*. The latter were more likely distributed by some happy father, out of gratitude to his gods having heard his prayers for a son and heir. He was probably rich enough to distribute them in large quantities, and the balance was passed on

from village to village, till the origin of the *chapdtis* became lost, and they went their way rejoicing as sacred *prasád*, that is food sent by the gods to their followers, to be partaken of sparingly and passed on to believers still farther off. The distribution of bread and sweets is a common practice in India, and we sometimes hear of thousands of plates passing over the land to wherever the sender's relatives and caste people reside. Nor is it rare to see cartloads of cooked food distributed by the Vaishnava Maharajas and other heads of religion among their followers. Thus the *chapátis* had probably no more to do with the Mutiny than had the "Ferocious Dooly," immortalized by the M.P. knowing everything about it all. And the moral of such incidents is, that if the people of India are superstitious, some of its administrators are no less ready to lose their heads.

But how do we account for the riots that broke out recently in several parts of the country? Well, these outbreaks had nothing of the political or the agrarian element in them, but arose solely out of religious fanaticism, though at a later stage a thirst for plunder and rapine might have been observed. The people are beginning to cherish a keener apprehension of their religious rights and privileges. The newspaper press here and there stimulate their zeal, and thus unconsciously help to spread the contagion of race hatred. The situation has become more difficult for Government. Hitherto, the Mahomedans had it much their own way. The Hindus are now beginning to assert

themselves. Strong in number, but slow in action, they somehow feel they have not been well used by the authorities. Government are not, probably, so much to blame. The Mahomedans are easier to get on with; they are generally frank and open, and willing to suit action to word. If numerically weak in India, they have large and powerful connections elsewhere. Equal justice between the two—stern and swift and impartial, as Lord Lansdowne declared at Agra—is the only remedy. Such breaches of the peace, however, do not constitute a new danger. They have been the curse of India for centuries, and rather than threatening a political danger they seem to emphasize the necessity of outside control.

Deplorable as these religious disturbances are, it would be more deplorable still to father them on the British *regime*: a cruel misreading of history and statesmanship alike. "Divide and Rule" is no part of British Policy; no responsible British statesman would countenance a principle of government, at once so vicious and so widely at variance with the spirit of the age and the declared policy of the Crown and of Parliament. Those who conjure up such a misgiving and carry it up to the foot of the Throne, complaining that the employment of a Mahomedan Munshi by Her Majesty leads to an assumption of partiality, show themselves as children clutching at any excuse for their own childishness. There is something touchingly childlike in these ebullitions of temper—a pious expectation, perhaps, of obtain-

ing justice and a little over. But those who expect to win by a personal appeal of this kind forget that as a private individual the Queen might please herself; that still, if she invites a Mahomedan to teach her the court language of India, she also sends for a Hindu to guide her in the mysteries of Indian art; that, in short, she goes upon qualification, not race, even in such matters. Her Majesty's interest in her Hindu subjects is no less keen than that she evinces in the Mahomedans. Was it not on an appeal from a Hindu lady that the Queen started the project of medical aid and relief for the women of India, which has now spread like a network over the continent, saving life and carrying health where disease and death were often the penalty of high position?

What has been said above does not, however, preclude the possibility of some of the minor executive, notably the Police, taking sides in these religious or race disputes, and even fomenting them. There are departments and departmental jacks that have to justify their existence, to secure continued employment. But once these are found making mischief, they will not be suffered to bring discredit on Government. It is for leaders of society to refuse to play into the hands of such official mischief-makers. They ought to help Government in plucking these out of the Public Service, instead of holding Government responsible for their misconduct. It is a blunder thus to make Government a party to the offence committed by this or that irresponsible subordinate. Leaders of public

opinion would be much more usefully employed in restraining their own followers. But, at the same time, do not Government expect too much from these leaders in the way of restraint, after a disturbance has broken out? They must remember that Native gentlemen have not half the *prestige* of Europeans. They are not allowed to join a Volunteer Corps, nor are they all invested with the other civic rights that enable Europeans to act fearlessly on an emergency, to say nothing of the disability with which the Native always starts—that of belonging to one section of the community as against the others. Is it fair to call upon co-adjutors, so poorly equipped, to stand up for the maintenance of the general peace?

With questions in which the masses of India have but a remote or an indirect interest we need not concern ourselves much here. Of these there have been a number of late before Government, and the conclusions arrived at by the latter will have been taken generally as foregone conclusions, inevitable results of causes in themselves more or less inevitable.

Take, for one, the question of simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service, which has excited keen interest among the educated classes. That there are very serious practical difficulties in holding the same examination at the same time in England and in India, cannot be denied. That such a reform may lead to similar difficulties with other parts of the Empire, may hold

equally good as an argument. But that these difficulties are insurmountable, it is not so easy to see. With their own standard and their own tests, English candidates have no fear of being swamped. Then, there is the necessity of fulfilling a solemn pledge—a matter of paramount importance. So far as to theory. What do we find in practice? We find the entire Liberal Cabinet, including Lord Ripon, opposed to the proposal, on the ground principally, that so long as the British have to maintain a certain Military hold over India, they must maintain a proportionate hold over the administration on the Civil side too. There is no mistake about this unanimous verdict, shared in by Conservative statesmen. Even as it is, the British Government are casting about for some means of fixing a minimum for native candidates, a low limit in number beyond which they could not be admitted in spite of successful competition. What, then, becomes of your theory of “free and open competition”?—oh ye logical rulers! Smuggling a minimum limit in the same breath with parading a free competition, open to all Her Majesty’s subjects! But the *ukase* has gone forth, and what remains for the aggrieved is to see if they could lead a side attack, less precarious and more certain of result. How would it do to establish a Civil Service Institute in India, with two or three of the best qualified Englishmen available, at the head, and a staff of equally competent Indian teachers? It would be a saving in time and money, and minimize the risks to which every Indian student

is more or less exposed in London, although it could not counteract the threatened laying down of a limit in number. Let the boy be trained in India, and be sent to London for the final examination, to remain there for a year or so after his pass. Among the other advantages of such an arrangement there is the one of really clever boys getting a chance. At present, it is only those who have money to spend that can afford the luxury of a five years stay in a foreign land, without much concern as to consequences. Under the proposed scheme a middle class boy, or even a poor boy, could have a trial and could repay the expenses of a short stay in England. Many more parents, besides, would be willing to part with their sons, for a short period, with much less expense to incur and much more certainty of success, and with a minimum of the risks inseparable from doubtful associations during a prolonged stay abroad, at a time of life least likely to resist succumbing to these associations.

But, after all, is not this cry for entrance into the Covenanted Civil Service more sentimental than otherwise? What signifies half a dozen more Indians getting in periodically? What is wanted is a fair, honest competition between Europeans and Natives for all branches of the Public Service—Engineering, Medical, Forest, Post, Telegraph, Police, Abkari, Railway and so on. Are the sons of the soil provided for in these departments in anything like reasonable proportion, with anything like the

interests of India in view, or the efficiency and popularity of the Service? Is employment under these heads always guided by principles of justice and fairplay? The open, unblushing partiality shown to outsiders constitutes a danger to the safety of the State, and detracts largely both from the efficiency and the popularity of some of the departments of the State. But here, too, the State needs co-operation from representatives of the people. These must aid their efforts towards the spread of scientific, technical and industrial education, so as not only to train up a generation of useful public officers, but also to develop the resources of the country. With such united efforts, the reproach, that Native students are wanting in practical business capacity, and the advocates of their claims in genuine public spirit, would also be removed. Surely, the classes that owe their wealth and influence to British supremacy can afford to part with a tithe of these, as thanks-offering to that beneficent agency, and as an initial help to those whose interests they have so much at heart. Where are our wealthy professional men, our merchant princes and zemindars?

Or, take the question of Poverty. This is among the pressing problems of the day. Why not face it, and be done? Is India growing poorer under the British Rule? The question, thus put, is rather misleading. But there is no other way, equally effective, in which to put it. It is an extremely difficult question, and

will hardly ever be answered fully in the affirmative or the negative. But still, an honest attempt ought to be made to face it. On the official side, it must be admitted that the standard of living tends to rise everywhere, excepting in those remote corners still unpenetrated by the smell of kerosine oil. It may also be admitted that the middle class of our day is almost a new class, a creation of the British—our lawyers, engineers, doctors, and other professionals. These make a wealthy and influential class by themselves, especially the lawyers. To them we must add the new race of cotton growers and workers in the fabric, as also the numbers absorbed by Government Service. As a set off, we must admit that the hereditary class as a whole, except perhaps in Bengal, has had a tendency towards impoverishment; while what are called the lower classes may be said to be stationary. For, though their wages or other earnings may have risen during the last fifty years, their wants also have risen or grown in number. On the whole, therefore, there seems to have been a redistribution of wealth, so far, more than a depletion. But here comes in an economic factor which unsettles the whole calculation. The annual drain of wealth from the country is appalling. It creates an emptiness which the fattest surplus possible to India cannot fill. To say that the drain is inevitable, is an extenuation, not a justification of the evil. It certainly cannot lead to a remedy. And it is a remedy, *some* remedy, that is wanted. But, it is asked, does it rest

with Government alone to find this remedy? Is the drain of wealth, in the shape of salaries, pensions, interest and other charges, the only cause of the poverty of India? Such a question appears to be beside the mark. So far as the British Government can check the outflow of India's lifeblood, they are bound to do it. Their being a foreign agency makes it all the more needful for them to be just to the subject population. If they are only reasonably just, just in the sense of ordinary business transaction, they will find India rich enough, at the end of a generation or two, to pay them perhaps fivefold in one shape or another.

Such questions, however, are too large and too abstract for the masses. Although touching them vitally, they do not press upon their physical consciousness in the daily affairs of life. The people of India are interested in them, only so far as they are shown to touch their pockets directly. But when Government resolved, for instance, to exempt Manchester cotton goods from the new tariff, the people undoubtedly felt that the rich and powerful had triumphed over the poor and helpless. They could not reason that Free Trade is one of the principal planks in the Liberal programme; that in matters like this and simultaneous examinations, the Liberal Ministry have to count with the Conservatives; that rather than weaken their position at home, or be shut out altogether from their sphere of usefulness abroad, the Ministers preferred to sacrifice far off India. Nor is it

easy for the people to see that the proceeds of a duty on Manchester goods would, as things stand, fail to reach their own pockets ; or that, as an indirect result of the present position, the Government of India are enabled to resist the claims of the forward military school ; or that the recent conversion of the Rupee Debt may have raised the credit of India so far, and averted fresh taxation, or at any rate given breathing time to the authorities. What is it to them, again, if officers in the enjoyment of salaries from Rs. 300 to Rs. 3,000 a month have a hard time of it and are losing heart ? The average Indian critic, who thinks himself passing rich on Rs. 30 a month, cannot be expected to sympathize very much with a man on Rs. 3,000 having to pinch and scrape. He knows nothing about the invalid wife, living in one part of Europe, the children being educated in another part, whilst the official has to maintain himself in fair style in India, after paying away the bulk of his salary toward these and a number of other obligations. And well may his ignorance be excused him. Is he not himself more sorely pinched than the poorest amongst English officials in the country ? Do not the Indians suffer more from the same causes that have led to the granting of a Compensation Allowance to the officials ? The time for making the grant was certainly ill-chosen, whatever the justice of the action taken.

But the thing the Indian *can* understand is that the English are masters of the purse ; that they

do what they like with India's resources ; that they are really killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. It is in this light that he views our military expenditure especially. The crores that have been spent upon Burmah, on and about Afghanistan—taken from the mouths of the starving millions of India—have these been spent for India's own benefit, and not of England also ? Then, why should not England give *her* share of these imperial charges ? Why should not the rich partner show *mercy* to the poor, to the extent of doing her *justice* ? This is what puzzles the simple-minded Indian, and well it may. Is it well it should continue to puzzle him longer ? In his ignorance the ryot accuses the Sirkar of squandering millions of money abroad, whilst at home the Sirkar taxes his salt and fuel and oil ; taxes everything, in short, that it can lay hands on. How could such a Sirkar or its officials know what a pinch of salt or a dry twig in the jungle means to him ? Little does the ryot know that the Sirkar is as helpless as himself ; indeed, more so, since the Government of India has scarcely the power of protesting against the exactions of the Treasury and the War Office in England. The position of the Government in this respect would hardly be envied by a shopkeeper's boy. They are often treated as a subordinate branch of the British Administration. They are not to spend what they earn, cannot adjust their own finances or devise their own schemes of taxation. They must earn so that their masters may spend the revenues, or help to spend them, on unproductive works taken up in the interests, not of

India alone, but of the whole British Empire. They have to feed upon the smaller Administrations in the country, in order to feed the Home Charges in England, the legacy of the old Purchase system which is primarily to blame for this *impasse*. A more anomalous position could hardly be conceived, or one more likely to take all the worker's heart out of his work. Practically, there is no such thing as a Government of India so far ; it is a mere Administration, living from hand to mouth, living on shifts and expedients, tiding over difficulties that never come to an end ; putting off the evil day, only to incur worse adversity and confusion. May it not be this financial dependence that has imposed upon the Government of India the necessity of diverting the Famine Insurance Fund from its sacred purpose ? The same cause may explain the starvation of useful spending departments of the State—though that of Railways has been well kept in hand—the over-zeal of the Revenue, the Excise and other earning departments, and the neglect of urgent reforms in the Administration. That very cause, again, may account for the vehement, almost frantic efforts of some of the officials to whitewash the Opium policy of the Government, in its economic as also in its moral and even international aspects. The dread of losing so much revenue at a time of stringent distress—though that was not what reasonable opponents of the policy desired—might well demoralize sober and self-reliant minds. For, is it not literally a position of shifts and expedients to which the Government of India have drifted ? The

latest of these make-shifts was the bit of Currency legislation, which has exercised intelligent opinion so much. As if Exchange were the only or the main cause of the evil sought to be remedied! Government probably knew this was not quite the case. But they must have felt helpless before all the hubbub made, and before the pressure of expert opinion from home. They might have seen, however, that if falling Exchange was at the bottom of the situation, it was a secondary cause, in fact the effect of the primary and more potent cause, the abnormally heavy outlay, especially on the military side, much of which found its way to Europe, converted from the homely white metal to the garish yellow. No economies and retrenchments could avail in such a case, so long as the dependent country had to bear a burden so crushing. No fresh taxation, that could be devised, would fill the recurring deficits, even if Government had the courage to tax the classes with a voice to resent such taxation. The real remedy lies in England gradually relieving India of part of the burden that does not fall legitimately on her, and the latter Government availing themselves to the full of qualified and trained native agency—cheaper, if not more efficient, than the European—for the subordinate branches of the Administration. What can artificial legislation do in a case like this? However, what is done cannot be lightly undone. Luckily, this Currency legerdemain will not do much harm, if it does no good permanently. The experiment would have been better left untried. But now

that the plunge has been taken, Government must make the best of the new situation, or crawl out of it at leisure. Experience has shown how sensitive the Indian market is to the slightest disturbance—how rajas and zemindars make a rush on their banks on the first rumour reaching them, about a change of policy, or of war in the East or the West.

Apart from its material side, the moral aspect of this helpless dependence is much more distressing to the Government of India. It tends to make their hold more feeble, and teaches them to temporize in the presence of large questions of principle or policy. How could a foreign Government, with something like insolvency staring it in the face, risk the displeasure of the more active of its subjects, in the performance of duty? It is often constrained, much against its instincts and traditions, to humour the whims, to subserve the senseless prejudices of the people. It must wink at its own backslidings, put up with injury or insult to the body politic. Such is the power of the purse in these days, that a Government, so badly stricken with poverty, and dependent withal on the will of its masters, must needs forego its privilege of initiating necessary measures of reform, undertaking useful works of progress. The Government of India is, after all, but a human institution, subject to all the frailties of our nature, and groaning under all its limitations of power. Among the many dangers, real and imaginary, near and remote, that have begun to shake the confidence of well-wishers of India and of England, there is probably none that

requires to be faced so promptly and courageously. It is for the British statesman especially to tackle this most pressing of modern problems, a problem that has led to a group of minor problems any one of which is intricate enough to tax the skill of the executive in charge of our current affairs. In this respect India is decidedly worse off than any of the Colonies. But it is urged that if the country is unwilling to pay for the blessings of a settled and progressive government, she may shift for herself. This sounds very much like the last echo of the now discredited "Perish India" cry. Apart from solemn pledges given on behalf of justice and equality, it is forgotten that India and England have become one for good ; that neither of them could possibly do so well without the other ; that this connection has to be maintained in the interests, not only of the two countries, but of the British Empire at large. By all means, have a fair return for your work and your risks. India is rich enough, if fairly treated, to repay, and more than repay, the cost of her administration. But no country, however rich or however dependent, can stand a perpetual drain of her resources, due to a disregard of economic laws. Let us pause to consider if, in sinking under the stress of this financial injustice, India may not drag the Empire down by the weight of her silent despair ? The poor ryot may not be able to grasp the whole situation clearly ; but he has an uneasy feeling that he does not get the wherewithals of life so readily as before, for instance, as his fathers did in the days of the Moghuls and the Marathas. The wealth of the

country, in those days, remained more or less *in the country*, however foolishly it was spent. This the ryot is quick enough to perceive, but not so quick to appreciate security of life and property, railway, sanitation, education, and other blessings of peaceful progress. If there is danger anywhere, it lurks somewhere here. Let the masses in India have enough to live upon, possibly with a standard of living that has a tendency to rise. Avoid to tax the poor man's necessities of life, to unsettle his mind with experiments in what is called Land Settlement, prevent the British soldier loafing about his homestead, his village tank or river; bring primary instruction within his reach; help him, with the aid of the educated and influential classes, to the smaller arts, industries and trades. Above all, cease to worry him with new laws; simplify, codify, popularize the laws already in force; and see to it that these laws are administered with as little executive aid as is absolutely necessary, in the shape of rules, bye-laws and other departmental devices. This much, or rather this little, for the people.

At the other end, you have to deal with the princes and aristocracy of the land. Deal with them gently, and where justice needs, firmly. Do not leave them so much at the mercy of the Politicals whom Lord Mayo described as "dangerous officials." Discourage the system of secret or confidential reporting to Government. It lends itself to injustice without a chance of redress, and is the cause of serious disaffection among this class.

of Her Majesty's alies and friends. No man, not the Raja, all men, should be condemned unheard. He has generally a large and devoted following, and the discontent that begins with one may end with hundreds and thousands. Avoid stultefying the Raja before his subjects. Do not think, because he smiles and says "Yes" to everything, that he does not feel. He is most sensitive when showing most indifference; most reluctant, perhaps, when showing the greatest willingness.

It is not to be denied that British influence on the administration of Native States has been, on the whole, salutary and productive of good for the people. The old idea, that the people live for their prince, has well nigh disappeared; and the States, considered either as social or administrative units, have begun to emerge from the anarchy and intrigue of old. It is for the good of the people, as a rule, that British intervention is exercised; but the impression often lingers behind every act of intervention on the part of the Political, that it was due less to a love of the people than to a love of parading his own authority, with a dash of mild hatred of the Raja to give flavour to the intervention. The love of supremacy, born with the average Briton, is accentuated, in this instance, by the position assigned to the Political, by his surroundings and by his ignorance or disregard of the difference in ideals that separate the new mode of administration from the old. And the better educated or more capable a Native Prince is, the more determined seems to be

the attempt to discredit his work and to degrade him in the eyes of the people. One result of this state of things, wherever it prevails, is the ascription of ulterior motive to every act and word of the Paramount Power, as interpreted by its Agent. The Durbar and the Agency thus breathe an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, destructive of co-operation and goodwill, though mimicking all the outward forms of social charity and official decorum. These remarks do not apply to all India, their scope of application being confined more or less to the Western Presidency. But if the same *system* obtains everywhere, it will not be difficult for the reader to see how wide-spread is the danger to which it must, sooner or later give rise.

Broadly speaking, the personal relations between the Native prince and his Political officer are more strained to-day than they were before. And it is the system, under which these relations are regulated, and not the officer, that is, as a rule, to blame for this tension. Indeed, it speaks well for the Politicals, as a class, that they manage to work so smoothly under a system so loose and irresponsible. But who can say, this apparent smoothness does not conceal sullen antagonism? To all appearance the Political Agent or his assistant is all-powerful in his place: he is master of the situation. If himself a good man, and surrounded by good advisers, he may prove a source of strength to the Raja, and a blessing to his subjects. Otherwise, whether capable or not,

he will become a source of weakness and dissension. The Raja has some skeleton in the cupboard, and the Political will hold his knowledge of it in *terrorem* over his head. The Chief must carry out the policy of the *Sahib*, accede to all his wishes, even his whims ; or, he will be "reported." In that report, marked *Confidential*, it is open to the Political officer to abuse his position almost to any extent. The other party will have no opportunity of meeting the allegations against him, or justifying his inability to accede to the wishes of the accuser. In a majority of cases, the report stands good at head-quarters. What could be expected from such a system but domination by brute force ? It is not to be supposed that the Chief is always blameless. If he were, the worst of Politicals could do him not the least harm. He often needs careful guidance, and at times, control. But it must be open, responsible, honourable control. Is the average Political qualified to exercise such control ? His very position of immunity is apt to spoil even a good officer. Once he knows he can make and unmake kings, he will not scruple to stretch his prerogative, especially if he happens to be surrounded by unscrupulous or intriguing subordinates. The fact, that the aggrieved Raja has no chance of redress, save through himself, makes the Political more reckless. How many innocent men and women have suffered under this system of reporting ! And how many unworthy ones have gained under it ! Now, why should not an opportunity be given to the accused to meet the

accusations made behind his back ? He may have some explanation to offer ; he will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that he has not been condemned unheard. At present, he knows it is he, the Raja alone, less fortunate than the humblest of the Queen Empress's subjects, who is thus condemned without a hearing.

And what is the meaning of this system of confidential reporting ? If it means anything, it presumably means that Government want to show they have implicit confidence in their agents accredited to Native Durbars. That these, "as officers and gentlemen," will be guilty of nothing wrong or mean in their relations with the Chiefs. This is fair assumption, so far ; the Political may not perhaps be able to keep his hold firm without it. But on the other hand, the evil to which this theory leads in practice should not be ignored. It is a real evil, and a very serious one, intensified with the presence of hot-headed youngsters in power. It seems to be more rampant in some parts than others, though not necessarily from the same cause, nor always for the fault of the Political officer. Where it exists in a chronic form it makes the Raja shifty and secretive. He may not be slow to use your own methods, and, perhaps, your own men. Any secrets you keep back from him he will try somehow to worm out. He can pay for them, and will not thank you for putting him to the expense. He will hate, and worse still, despise you, when he knows the length to which you are capable of going. He will do everything he can to

checkmate his tyrant, and finally settle down into a discontented grievance-monger. One such Raja may prove more troublesome than a hundred disappointed graduates. As it is, he seems to be driven, in despair, to doubtful associations. If he cannot do you harm, may he not connive at others doing it? If he cannot openly join a popular agitation, what is to prevent his supplying the sinews of war? He may help, in more ways than one, to discredit the Administration. Here is a danger to which the Englishman seems to be wilfully blind. And for what? For a mere sentiment, often an idle superstition, a fetich before which he grovels in his huge ungainly fashion. What is prestige without truth and honour to support it? The only way to improve the relations between the Chiefs and the Politicals is, in all ordinary cases, to bring them face to face, to give the Chiefs some opportunity of explaining themselves. There is no other way of doing justice. And no other way of inducing the Political Bahadur to do justice in such cases, except by showing that Government care more for justice than for prestige. Here, too, is an opening for the educated talent of India. There should be more of our educated men at the Durbar and at the Agency. They may be hard at first to get on with, being too bumptious to bow the head or bend the knee. But for the same reason, they will be found more honest as mediators, more self-respecting and more intelligently loyal.

Between the Raja and the ryot, really stands this educated Indian, a product of western education and an admirer of western methods of government. You have equipped him for a new life, and yet condemn him to the old. Is this fair, desirable, possible? You have widened his horizon, and yet will not let him look beyond. You have taught him self-respect and independence, but will not bear him, now that he is beginning to assert himself. Why lose patience with him because of his impatience of guidance and control? It is natural he should crave for power and position. Try to sympathize with him, to utilize him as an interpreter. Divert his ambition into nobler channels; help him to go forth amongst his people with a message of peace, goodwill and general progress. Infinite is his capacity for doing good, though his power for harm-doing is not so great as you fear. He lacks the hereditary prestige of the Raja, the strength of the people, lent by number. But in no sphere could the educated Indian be better utilized than in that of internal reform—political, social, sanitary, industrial. Give him a free hand, under your supervision, if he happens to be in the Public Service. Avoid differential treatment, as much as you can, between him and his European colleague. See to it that you do not drive him, by systematic injustice, either on the military or the civil side of the Administration, into a sort of outlawry against the reign of law and order. He knows your administrative and other secrets, and as a public critic, will use this knowledge effectively, fighting you with your own

weapons. And bad as he is as an open critic, a discontented native in this position will be worse as a secret inciter of discontent. Here, too, the relations between the European superior and the Native subordinate would seem to be less sympathetic at present than, say, twenty-five years ago. Probably, things are not so bad as they seem. Manners change rapidly, and change of manners is often mistaken for change of sentiment. But there must be a solid residuum of estrangement still to account for ; and perhaps the best way to account for it is to refer it straight back to the system of western education provided by the British Government with their eyes open. It cannot be too often repeated, that with more of this education the Indian acquires more independence. He learns to dislike lip-loyalty, and to value self-respect. This is gall and wormwood to the narrow-minded bureaucrat who mistakes independence for disloyalty and self-reliance for aggressiveness. He thinks the Indian ungrateful for asserting himself thus, after profiting by the advantages offered by education. He forgets, for the moment, that the recipient of these advantages is simply trying to utilize them. That he is doing precisely what the importers of European education required. This system of education was introduced, after a hard fight, in the expectation of liberating the Indian mind ; in short, for qualifying it for the privileges and the responsibilities of British citizenship. What an ungenerous, illogical attitude of mind his is, who quarrels with his fellow-subjects striving to make the best of the position they have been called upon to fill !

What the Political Agent is to the Chief and his Durbar, the Mamlatdar is, in a way, to the people in British districts. Like the Political Agent, the Mamlatdar, or the Collector Magistrate after whom he takes, is often looked upon as a tiger. Rich and poor alike tremble before him; they believe he can put the most respectable man, within his jurisdiction, in irons, and march him off to the Police station. Has he not the Police at his back? Is he not virtually a four-armed monster?—policeman, prosecutor, judge and jury? This is at least what the ryot thinks, and you cannot induce him to think otherwise. In the case of the luckless Mamlatdar the evil arises from a different cause, from his exercising judicial as well as revenue functions. He is more powerful in the mofussil than the whole Government of India. The question of separating his judicial from his executive functions has vexed the souls of successive rulers. They fear such separation would involve a large outlay. But there are many who, having studied the question carefully, think it is possible to separate the functions with but a small additional charge. What is such outlay before the immense relief given to the people by thus clipping the claws of the Mamlatdar tiger? There is no other official under the Administration, who renders it so unpopular, as a bad Mamlatdar.

We have now taken a turn fairly round India, the land of problems. Very perplexing are some

of these problems ; but they all seem to arise out of, and also to merge themselves in, one big broad problem—the problem of Mutual Trust, proceeding from justice on the one hand, and forbearance on the other. On her side, England must do justice to India, not merely in regard to her material wants, but equally so in regard to her moral wants. It would never do for her to govern an Empire on trade principles—so much of purely administrative work for so much gold every year. That would be a perversion of England's mission to India. She is pledged to lift up this country to her own level of civilized life. The moment she ceases to redeem this pledge, she must expect to be reduced to the level of the dependent country. Such seems to be the design of Providence ; such is the teaching of History. Why should local discontent, and class or race animosities upset the Paramount Power? Her hold on the masses is as effective as ever. If a plebiscite were taken to-day, the mass of Indian population would vote solid for British Supremacy. For, unreflecting and uncomplaining as this immense mass of humanity is, it can yet appreciate, in a dim sort of way, the security of life and property which are the first visible symbols of British Civilization. The average Indian villager needs but a handful of rice for himself and a patch of grass for his cattle. With these secured to him against the inroads of man and beast, and with the fruits of his industry or enterprise well within his reach,

he will never be found willing to go back to Native Rule, or to any other from the outside, of which he is almost incapable of forming an idea. This is the one central fact; and India, with her gods many and her lords many, with her perjured witnesses and prophets of evil, dare not gainsay this cardinal fact. The rural population is deeply attached to *Ranika Raj*, even more so than to the eccentric paternal rule of John Company Bahadur. So far all is well. But how long will it continue to be well? With pressure on the soil increasing; with the standard of life on a rise, and the means of subsistence almost the same; with the educated classes engrossed with schemes of political aggrandisement—a natural outcome of the routine of education and association to which they have been subjected—and, in their turn, ready to infect the masses with western ideas of liberty without the precious counterpoise of responsibility; how long is the situation to remain unaltered? Here, with all the forbearance that Great Britain can claim from her educated *protégé*, she may yet be confronted with the problem of problems, the danger of all dangers.

And this brings us to the darkest phase of the Problem of Administration—the Position of Women. Till State and Society alike, in India, realise the miseries of that position, and combine to mitigate them, there is little hope for progress or good understanding. The present one-sided

activity is more or less doomed to disappointment, in itself a danger to be avoided. What could you expect from a nation whose mothers have to live in perpetual infancy?—married in their early teens, often to become widows before they are out of their teens. Can these be the mothers of heroes and patriots and statesmen? The women of India have really no existence, as apart from the men. Their life is one of dire dependence. And as are the women, so, naturally, must be the men—dependent upon others for almost everything in life, without a career and without the resources for working out their own destiny. They have nearly lost the power of initiative for purposes of self-improvement. The conditions of life seem to have become adverse to self-reliant effort from within. A foreign Government have lent the prestige of their own law to some of the customs and usages of the people, which, but for such prestige would have died a natural death. Nay, this foreign Government, while proclaiming their neutrality, have actually foisted their own legal traditions on the domestic law of India. Is it too much to ask them to withdraw from this false position, and thus enable the representatives of the people to set their houses in order? There is no need of exceptional legislation, or of fresh expenditure. But when will Government *practise* the neutrality they preach, by simply declining to give *their* sanction to infant marriages?—that is, unconsummated infant marriages or those under 12? When will they

refuse to entertain the claim for "restitution of conjugal rights," or at least leave the matter to the discretion of the courts? This claim is foreign to the Indian sentiment, and has ceased to be entertained in England itself, whence it was imported into India. Is it not time, too, the Government afforded such facilities for social reform as have been promised time after time, in aid of voluntary effort, without which such effort must necessarily fail? It is sad to find the Paramount Power lagging behind even in the matter of an Enabling Act, when Native States like Bhavnagar, Mysore and Baroda have already taken the lead; and when the brave Rajputs of Rajputana have put a stop to infant marriages and the wicked waste of money incidental thereto. To whom are these reforms in Native India mainly due? Why, to British officers, but for whose advice and guidance they might not have been undertaken even by the more enlightened Durbars. The initiative and the organization have come from our English friends. Is it impossible for Government and their officials to supply these essentials to British India under their own charge? In the English-educated natives, on the one hand, and the heads of castes, on the other, they possess most useful interpreters. The former have the University Senates and the Local Self-government Boards, for example, to work through; the latter have the panchayets for their instruments. It is earnestly to be hoped that the British Government will meet their responsibilities in time, and

first, by withdrawing from a false position, and secondly, by showing the way to true national reform, help to build up a nationality worthy of their lasting partnership, and to solve a problem that has been approached from many sides, but has never yet been probed to its core. The marriage system of India is, indeed, her problem of problems; the mystery, the passion play of her daily life, stamping all her national concerns—arts, sciences, industries, commerce, and agriculture—with its own mark of premature development, arrested growth and early decay. Will it be otherwise in politics of which so many of our young men seem to be enamoured? The public life of a nation is but an elaboration of its family life. Where the latter is overshadowed by the presence of the child-wife struggling with premature maternity, or the spectre of the child-widow struggling with life-long penitentiary widowhood, it is idle to expect justice, equality, freedom or independence in the sphere of public affairs; idle, likewise, to expect due appreciation of these qualities in others. The one must react upon the other. May not this be the true explanation of the inconsistencies, the unrealities, of our public life?—of our lack of vitality and sustained interest, of our want of business habits? Against all these we seek outside initiative and guidance—hardly one great movement has been started in modern India without such aid. But where the monopoly of sex is concerned, we spurn external aid, even from the best of friends. It is not contended for a moment that India should adopt European ideals of life. All that is sought

is that she should go back to the older, wiser ways. A wife at 10, a widow at 12, (in many a case the age limits stand much lower), a mother at 13—these are monstrosities in the face of which it is madness to think of a consistent, progressive public life. And so long as this state of things continues, so long will the Indian Sphinx continue to laugh at the efforts of man to shake her from her purpose which is to puzzle, to mistify, and to undo the work of years. Let History bear witness how many movements, religious and political, she has swallowed up with calm unconcern, waiting for each of them to ripen only to be devoured.

BEHRAMJI M. MALABARI.

BOMBAY, DECEMBER 1894.



SUPPLEMENT.

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A TALK WITH MY EDUCATED COUNTRYMEN.

Some of my friends in the native press are surprised to find Anglo-Indian writers approving of my views generally, while they are supposed to ignore, and sometimes even oppose, almost identical views ventilated by certain Congress organs. Well, in the first place, these friends assume too much in thinking that the Anglo-Indian press have approved of my views generally, as set forth in the memorandum or elsewhere. As a matter of fact, Anglo-Indian writers have demurred to not a few of my opinions and observations. It may be added here in passing, for information of the hypercritical, that they are quite wrong in believing or making believe that in the memo. I have lavished praise on Anglo-Indian officialism or press, or on the Administration at work. Nothing of the sort. If hysterical critics take the trouble to read and to understand the thing they are panting to criticise, they will spare themselves many a fit. In the present case, I have actually preached at the officials as plainly, if not more so, as at the extreme section of the Congress organization. It is true, however, that Anglo-Indian opinion is more *tolerant* in dealing with me than with others of its victims, just as I am more *tolerant* in dealing with it than are most of my fellow-workers. In fact, the one is the result of the other. There may be other reasons too. A Maratha writer, for instance, thinks that, as a critic, I have too much in me of the milk of human kindness. On the face of it, this appears to have much force in it. Left to myself, I prefer love to hate, peace to war, constructive work to criticism or argument. But analyzing my own mind, I do not think I give more than their due to the English. Here a little confession of faith may not come amiss, especially as I am talking to friends ready to forgive faults of temper or training. To begin with, then, my ideas of journalism are peculiar, as was remarked two years ago by a French critic. To me journalism is not a trade, not a business, not even a profes-

sion ; it is an avocation, a call, a holy mission. In this field of effort I have undertaken a humble rôle, that of an interpreter, a peace-maker. I know my place to be behind the heroes and warriors of words, the mighty speech-makers ; and am proud of my obscure position. But my sense of responsibility is very acute. What an awful charge the building up and governing of this Eastern Empire is on the English ! As an interpreter between them and my own countrymen, let me beware how I abuse my trust by ever so little deviation from what I conceive to be the path of duty as conducing to the common good. Very often I despair of being able to do good in my humble capacity, so difficult is becoming the task of governing India in her own interest. And when, at such moments, I see some weevil of a "we" denouncing the whole system of Government as a failure and a fraud, and offering to bear the burden of the Empire and its own little back, I cannot help feeling for the silent minority—a handful of foreigners, groping in the dark, feeling their way, inch by inch, to the maintenance of peace between antagonistic elements, to the solvency of the State and its security from foreign aggression, and to the amelioration of the lot of nine-tenths of its teeming millions. In such moments of anxiety, with criticism running mad in some quarters, I *may* be apt to become lenient to the official class. If this is a defect, I am sorry for it. I have to confess to another defect of character, too ; namely to a natural aversion to rings. I cannot join a combination, cannot work in a ring. For instance, the Congress movement in the abstract is one of the dreams of my life—indicating the first awakenings of national life for India. But if you ask me to fall down and worship its outward symbols—its huge pavilion and annual show, its camp hotels and unions, its resolutions made to order, and its unanimous votes—I must decline the honour. I cannot do this, but do not quarrel with you for doing it. You may be the better for doing it ; I am content to be the worse for omitting to do it. In a word, I am unfitted by nature to use the Congress, though always ready to be used by it for the good of the country. To its cake-and-wine politics I am quite unable to contribute. But if I bring it nothing in this direction, by way of tribute, I also claim nothing from it. Let those who understand the business make

the best of it. To me a Congress ring is as unattractive as an official bureau. Both may have their uses for others. But I do not feel drawn to them. The Congress Idea is sacred enough to absorb my admiration. With its methods, especially those flaunted by some of its native adherents, I cannot sympathize. This is perhaps a defect in character, and as a citizen I have to pay for it often and in many shapes.

With such mental attitude, is it very surprising if I judge the official less harshly than do his professional critics? If I work under certain drawbacks, I have some advantages, too, on my side. I have seen a good deal of administrative work in British India and elsewhere. I have had access to official and demi-official literature, vouchsafed perhaps to few outsiders. I have read a little bit of history for myself. I understand a little bit of human nature. And it seems to me on the whole, that India is better governed now than under her previous rulers; better governed, indeed, than she can be governed by any possible successors of the British from outside. I may go further and say that in some respects India is better governed under the British than almost any State on the continent of Europe. Such being my view of the case, I cannot but be an indulgent critic. I am ready to make allowance for the difficulty of the situation, for mistakes that are inevitable. I try to put myself in the position of the rulers while judging them. And all this I do, less from a sense of sympathy with England than from a sense of the interests of my own country. For, I know that, for purposes of peaceful administration, to say nothing of war, diplomacy or statesmanship, I am not the equal of a well-educated English official. As a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, he will beat the best of us. And no wonder. Does he not start with an immense advantage, inherited and acquired? For one thing, he is the son of a free, intelligent, capable mother who has had the moulding of his life. He is a man all round, a whole man, an integer of humanity; not a fraction, like I am. In mind and body, whether it be in the office room, the camp or the field, he is in many respects my superior. Can I help admiring that solitary stranger, working for and with a million of my countrymen of all classes and grades, striving to hold the balance, and as a rule, facing disease and death in the performance of his duty?

But if he knows and works better than we, do we not pay him for it!—you ask. Of course, we do. He has not come out as a philanthropist. And even as a paid workman he is not an angel. He is slow, unsympathetic, suspicious and credulous by turn. On the whole, I am afraid he is deteriorating. But he is a capable fellow still, and believes in himself. He loves the people in a lofty paternal style, and sometimes makes an ass of himself in the same lordly fashion. Except when surrounded by parasites who have his ear, he is impartial as between Hindu and Musulman, though not often so as between Englishman and Native. As a human machine he is honest, grinding so much every day for so much of depreciated silver. As a citizen, that is as a non-official, the Englishman is willing to allow others to help themselves to the good things of life after he has helped himself; and now and then he may even lend a hand at the former process. Above all, he is for the weak as against the strong. Much of this is precisely what we want at this stage of our new civilization. We must have a longer contact with the creature, if we require to get on with, and improve upon, the political education we have already acquired. To ask for more power, without being prepared to acquit ourselves of the corresponding responsibility, would be a certain way of defeating our own object. We must have more cohesion, and much greater power to work and to suffer. *When* the happy day will come for India to become a self-governing nation, the eye of faith alone can see. I hope it may come, and come sooner than the most sanguine among us anticipate. But if ever the day comes, it is this contact with England and with the English mind that will accelerate its advent. It is from this contact mainly that we have derived our ideas of equality and freedom, on which our hope of a nationality must rest. Anything that weakens the contact makes this consummation more remote; anything that deprecates the contact points to retrogression, not progress. The truth of this we observe every day around us, in almost every concern of life. It impresses itself upon every sober, impartial friend of progress. Such, at any rate, is my view of the position. It may be wrong; and if so, I am open to correction. It is on this account that I refrain from committing my journal to my personal opinion. The paper belongs to the public, any one of whom is welcome to put me out of court.

ANOTHER TALK WITH MY EDUCATED COUNTRYMEN.

If the proposition stands, that more than half the evils of Society are self-inflicted, it stands to reason that Society is bound to devote more than half its aggregate effort to the removal of these self-inflicted evils. It follows, too, that the effort must proceed mainly from within, on the basis of self-help: for, according to that expressive Hindi proverb, *apa mare bin swarga na jae*, no one can go to Heaven unless he himself dies. These are practically the views of the Social Reform party in India. They feel that domestic and social reform must pave the way for political progress. But they do not insist upon this condition as a *sine qua non* on the part of every individual worker. They are anxious, on the contrary, that a certain number of qualified men should devote themselves to political questions; others to national questions, not strictly political or administrative, and so on; with all of whom the social reformers are equally anxious to co-operate. It is difficult, therefore, to understand why, in a certain narrow groove, the feeling prevails that social reform must always stand apart from political progress, as a bad rival. Such violent divorce is undesirable in the interests of civilization. Much more difficult still to understand is the feeling, expressed in plain language, that the social reformers are bent upon securing 'foreign interference,' 'the coercion of the law,' and many other dreadful things. So far as I am aware, the party of reform have never asked for interference of any kind on the part of the British Government. They have explained, times without number, that certain wellknown evils being admitted as eating into the fabric of Society, the representatives of that Society should adopt a common basis of action against those evils; and having determined upon such a basis, should ask the Government, which is *their* Government, to sanction and thereby make operative any such measure as the representatives of Society have concerted for the common good. In short, what the reformers want is the co-operation of the State just to the extent of enabling Society to carry out its own programme of work. The State is willing, as a rule, to give such co-operation,

when duly asked for. Are leaders of Society in a position to apply for it? Have they secured a basis of action, made a *bandobast* among themselves? If not, what are they waiting for? They do not deny the existence of the evils. Why, then, put off taking the initiative? Because, I am afraid, the power of initiation is lost to them. This is a serious enough misfortune in itself. But it does not end here. The lack of initiative is made up for by superabundance of opposition. Not only is every proposal to remedy the self-inflicted evils of Society to be opposed and clamoured against; but every attempt to amend a defective law, or to abrogate an imported law, to be frustrated. The opposition of certain Bengali journals of repute to the proposal, recently made by the Law Member, to leave the execution of the decree for the so-called "Restitution of Conjugal Rights," is a case in point. This proposal appears to have been drowned under an avalanche of words, more or less without any bearing on the point at issue, and probably raising the usual cry of "religion in danger," "interference with domestic questions" and so forth. This class of critics will argue in a circle, always avoiding the centre of it. In truth, they will not argue, but arguefy, creating imaginary difficulties to satisfy their love of argumentation. They are keen logicians, and will chop logic beautifully fine. I think they will split a hair into more numerous fractions than I can saw a log of wood into. Who can argue with these gentlemen? Not I, for one. As a rule, I keep miles away from them and their arguments.

On this occasion, however, I venture to have a little chat with my Bengali friends as to the *facts* of this blessed 'Restitution' business. They may, perhaps, remember that the clause for the 'Restitution of Conjugal Rights' was *imported* into India about eighteen years ago, a relic of the Christian ecclesiastical law. This smuggling of a foreign law into India was, of course, well-intentioned, the main object, I suppose, being to secure uniformity. But we have the word of the importer himself, to say that if he had known what would be the effect of the importation, he would not have attempted it. His excuse—quite valid—is his own ignorance, at the time, of the conditions of life in this country, and the absence of a public opinion to guide him. He and his

successors cannot deny that this importation of a foreign church law was an *interference*, on the part of the Government, with the marriage customs of the people of India. And they agree that Government ought to withdraw from this position in order to resume their much vaunted position of neutrality. My friends will thus see that what the reformers want is, not interference but withdrawal from the interference that has already taken place. They will also see that in a community among whom no marriage is properly *instituted*; that is, where no conjugal rights have accrued; where most marriages take place without the consent, often without the knowledge of the parties vitally concerned; there can be no *restitution* of conjugal rights. They will also see that the question is one of *law*, not of social custom; that it was as a question of law, pure and simple, that Government took it up in the first instance. And more than all this, my friends will see that the "Restitution" clause, having been done away with in Christian England, whence it was smuggled into this country, has not the shadow of an excuse for disgracing our statute book longer. This, in itself, is sufficient reason why the clause must go. The Government of India have realized their position, and have waited all this while for a suitable opportunity to set themselves right with their own conscience, or what shreds of conscience they may have left to them. They now see an opportunity for some half-hearted move, and are willing that the execution of the decree for "restitution" be left in future to the discretion of the Courts, although their Law Member is for brushing aside the whole barbarous thing. Well, the reformers are willing to accept even this miserable minimum of a concession to the claims of womanhood. They know that it is less than justice. But knowing, also, that women have little voice in India; that they do not assemble at public meetings or write for the press, or otherwise force the hands of Government, or lead an organized opposition; knowing, too, that men in India have it all their own way, and can make it very hot for the authorities if they choose; the reformers try to make the most of this half measure. And what is the attitude of the reactionaries? Why, the same as usual, that of *non-possumus*. They won't have Government retrace a single step: Government must not withdraw even from their false

position of interference, if they expect the approval and confidence of men monopolists. And Government is, after all human. So the reactionists think they will play the old game of opposition once more, the one played almost successfully at the passing of the Age of Consent Bill. Who can tell but that they may succeed this time? But what a success! Have these gentlemen counted the cost? Do they know how much they have lost, and with them all India, by their wanton, suicidal opposition of '90? In descending to such arguments as "we cannot allow our girls to remain unmarried after 10," they wrote themselves down as irreclaimable savages. In their lust for argument they painted themselves much blacker than they were; and the paint sticks to them. Are they going to give it an extra coating now? What is it to *them* if the Government of India see their own mistake and endeavour to correct it? Government did not consult the people before importing the 'Restitution' clause. Why should they consult the people before getting rid of it? And why should the people care for what never belonged to them?—what is, in fact, a slur upon their manhood? Think of marrying a girl of 5 to a man of 25, and of the man claiming her person as soon as she is 12, whatever the disparity between the two. Think of a *man* invoking the aid of a foreign law in dragging that tender, innocent child to his house, or to the nearest prison. Is there one father or brother in India, who can brook such an outrage? And yet there are men, educated men, who, out of false pride, will have the outrage perpetuated by law. Our Hindu friends are never tired of reminding Mahomedans of their sin in killing cows. If that be a sin of which Mahomedans are guilty, will they forgive my asking how much greater is the sin of marrying a girl in her infancy, without her knowledge or consent, and then, on the top of a bad social usage putting the whole weight of a worse foreign law—already discarded in the land of its birth—to have that so-called marriage legalized? Let me beg of these gentlemen not to expose the country to further unmerited humiliation. They are not half so bad as, in the heat of argument, they show themselves to be. Their best course is to say to Government—do what you like with your 'Restitution' clause which we

never wanted, and which is really opposed to Hindu sentiment. No Hindu, worthy of the name, cares for an unwilling wife. To force such a wife to live with her husband is not at all the way of securing happiness or honour.

As to the rest, let my Hindu friends try to move in time. Let each caste make its own arrangements for mending its marriage laws ; and having come to a common understanding, ask the State, as their servant and executor of their common will, to ratify and sanction that understanding and thus make it operative. As I have said over and over again, ninety-ninth of the whole work rests with themselves ; it is for the hundredth part, the vital, though not fundamental, that they have to seek the co-operation of the State. This being a foreign agency is purely an accident ; it is *our* Government nevertheless. Let us utilize it, while we may, to this very small extent. If we can do without it, well and good. But can we ? Have we ever been able to do so in the smallest matter ? Let us take a case in point—*Kulinism*. This practice of one man “marrying” five, ten, twenty, forty, sixty, “wives”—of any age or position ; “marrying” even without seeing them, and condemning most of them all his life to neglect, and to the pangs of perpetual widowhood, after his death ; this practice has prevailed amongst the *Kulins* or high-born Brahmins of Bengal—latterly, I hope, on a restricted area. The *Kulins* are probably the most influential caste in India, certainly the best educated. I have had some of my dearest friends amongst them. How is it, that this politically and intellectually the strongest caste have not yet been able to do away with *Kulinism* ? For years have I been asked to attack the system, but have thought it wiser to leave it to the good sense of the caste. It is a self-contained little community, and can get rid of the evil in a month’s time, if it chooses to. Among our English friends the feeling obtains that the *Kulins* either care not or dare not. My own impression is that they have no leisure, being so taken up with politics and literature. Like the Pandits and Shastris of Poona, who promised Lord Reay’s Government to do everything themselves in the way of social reform, if left alone for a time, the *Kulins* have not yet ventured to

set an example and to demand corporate action. Each waits for his neighbour to take the lead. Action in such matters leads to unpopularity; the priests and other monopolists, who live mainly upon bad customs, cannot be expected to approve of reforms in this direction. And as the priest cannot come up to the level of the English-educated Hindu, the latter is perhaps going down to the level of the ignorant priest. How else are we to explain recent agitations? The *Hindu* of Madras, in a couple of very thoughtful leaders, the other day, tried to show that the British Government in India, as an institution, sets a bad example to the institutions proper to the country. There is much in this way of looking at the thing. But it strikes me, the case might be put better the other way. May not the Government of India be losing in its moral fibre and grip of principle by contact with our indigenous institutions? In a word, may not the Government be coming down to the level of the people? Verily, the East is reacting upon the West perhaps more than the West has acted upon the East. This may be a triumph for latter-day Hinduism. But when achieved, it will be found to be a dearbought triumph. And, in some respects, England will suffer as much as India, though the greater sufferer on the whole will be India. Let my educated countrymen take heed in time. Let them see that it is the British Government that will become their sheet-anchor when the sea gets rough. They must expect nothing from reactionary priests or monopolists of wealth and power. These will use them as instruments, and drop them as soon as done with. How can *they* appreciate Western education? Between that system of education and their own scheme of life and polity the gulf is too wide to be bridged in a few generations. If the English leave India to-day what will the educated Indians do? Have they thought of their position? Don't presume to much, my dear friends, on your influence either with the orthodox leaders or the people at large. Above all, do not think you have scored one by frightening Government away from this or that measure of duty. You have not gained, but have lost, and lost heavily. The Anglo-Saxon is a slow, selfish, practical fellow. When, on the one hand, you refuse to accept the Religious Endowment Bill, for instance, or to allow the "Restitution" clause to be got rid of; and, on the other,

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ask for this or that political concession, you make John Bull smile grimly and button up his coat. Instead of giving you anything more, he will growl to himself—"These fellows have had too much." John cannot stand nonsense; if he once makes up his mind that he has to deal with a set of peevish, impatient, inconsistent, irresponsible politicians, he will know how to act. Very gloomy appears to me to be the outlook for such educated Hindus—on the one hand, alienating English sympathy in almost every direction; on the other, drifting further apart from the Mahomedans, as the latter grow higher in the social scale. But the subject is not a pleasant one to enlarge upon.



